

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BONN

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 08599

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GW, US, VN, VS

SUBJECT: INFORMATION REQUESTED BY WEST GERMAN VIETNAM
POW BERNHARD DIEHL

REF: BONN 8396

1. AS INDICATED IN REFTTEL, DIEHL HAS INFORMED EMBASSY
THAT HE CANNOT TAKE ADVANTAGE OF DEPARTMENT' S OFFER TO
VISIT US THIS YEAR. ONE REASON DIEHL GAVE IS THAT HE
IS BUSY WRITING A BOOK.

2. IN THIS CONNECTION, DIEHL ASKED EMBOFF WHETHER WE
MIGHT BE ABLE TO HELP HIM GET INFORMATION ON A FORMER
AMERICAN SOLDIER IN VIETNAM WHOM DIEHL KNEW ONLY BY THE
NAME " BOB" AND WHO ALLEGEDLY DEFECTED TO THE VIET CONG
AROUND 1967. ACCORDING TO DIEHL' S INFORMATION, " BOB"
WAS CAPTURED IN 1965 AND WAS KEPT IN DETENTION IN SOUTH
VIETNAM FOR ABOUT TWO YEARS. HE WAS THEN SUPPOSED TO
BE RELEASED, BUT INSTEAD WENT OVER TO THE VIET CONG.
AT THE TIME DIEHL FIRST ENCOUNTERED HIM, HE WAS WORKING
AT " CAMP TWO" FOR VC. DIEHL MENTIONED THE NAMES OF US
SOLDIERS WILLIS, STRICKLAND AND COIN (WHO HE UNDERSTOOD
WERE RELEASED TO US AUTHORITIES IN LATE NOVEMBER 1969)
AS FELLOW IN- MATES OF CAMP TWO WHO MIGHT BE ABLE TO
PROVIDE INFORMATION ON " BOB." DIEHL ALSO MENTIONED
IN THIS CONNECTION A DR. KUSHNER WHO IS SUPPOSED TO
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HAVE BEEN RELEASED IN MID- MARCH OF THIS YEAR. DIEHL UNDERSTANDS THAT " BOB" WENT TO NORTH VIETNAM IN 1971, EITHER AS PART OF A VIET CONG CONTINGENT OR WITH THE NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY. DIEHL, ALONG WITH SEVERAL OTHER FORMER IN- MATES OF CAMP TWO, ENCOUNTERED " BOB" HAGAIN AT THE " HANOI HILTON." DIEHL BELIEVES THAT " BOB" WAS WORKING AT THAT TIME IN THE PROPAGANDA DEPARTMENT OF THE " VOICE OF VIETNAM" AS A LIEUTENANT.

3. DIEHL SAID HIS MAIN REQUEST, APART FROM GATHERING GENERAL INFORMATION ON " BOB", WAS WHETHER " BOB" HAD ASKED FOR ASYLUM IN VIETNAM OR WHETHER, LIKE THE MEMBERS OF THE SO- CALLED " PEACE COMMITTEE", HE HAD BEEN FORCED TO LEAVE.

4. EMBASSY REALIZES THAT DIEHL' S REQUEST FOR INFORMATION AND INTENDED PUBLICATION OF IT MIGHT CREATE DIFFICULTIES IN CONNECTION WITH POSSIBLE PROSECUTION OF US POWS. WE HAVE NO WAY OF JUDGING HOW SERIOUS THESE DIFFICULTIES MIGHT BE AND ARE PASSING DIEHL' S REQUEST ALONG TO THE DEPARTMENT IN CASE SUCH INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE AND COULD LEGITIMATELY BE PASSED ON TO HIM. WE WOULD APPRECIATE AN EARLY RESPONSE.
HILLENBRAND

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** EXDIS

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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